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ABSTRACT

During the early history of amateur athletics, the large and affluent athletic clubs--mostly in New York City--took the initiative in the formation of the first associations of amateur clubs, the National Association of Amateur Athletes of America (NAAAA), and its successor, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). Athletic clubs in New York City in the nineteenth century were stratified along religious, ethnic, occupational, political, and social class lines. These factors had a significant impact on the athletic associations and sport governing bodies. Although the NAAAA maintained that it was the national governing body for amateur sport, it was never capable of controlling professionalism and gambling, and never, in reality, a national organization. In 1888 the New York Athletic Club withdrew from the NAAAA to form the AAU. The AAU was then the dominant association until these two organizations merged in 1890. During the next twenty-five years the power of the New York clubs in the AAU declined. However, they still maintained their influence on the AAU governing board through the hard work of several of their representatives. The New York clubs were thus able to hold positions of power in athletic club associations disproportionate with their numbers. The decisions and policies that were made therefore may have favored these larger, upper middle class male clubs. These affluent athletic clubs, however, gained a respectability for sport which it otherwise would never have achieved. (RC)

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The Effect of New York's Elite Athletic Clubs on American Amateur Athletic Governance 1870 - 1915

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Introduction

In the period between the Civil War and World War I the unprecedented growth of amateur and professional sports in the United States necessitated the development of organizational structures to standardize rules, develop policies, handle disputes and function in the promotion of sport. Since these early organizations were the product of the individuals and groups which founded and governed them, it is likely that the philosophies and special interests of the dominant members greatly influenced the early direction and conduct of sport. It is also possible that many of the same early influences, through precedent and tradition have continued to affect the conduct of sport even to the present.

In amateur sport it was the large and affluent athletic clubs, primarily in New York City, which took the initiative in the formation of the first viable associations of amateur clubs, the National Association of Amateur Athletes of America, and its successor, the Amateur Athletic Union. The influence of these athletic clubs and the individuals who represented them upon the governance of amateur sport in the United States has never been adequately documented. The specific question which this study attempted to answer was:

What influence did elite athletic clubs, and the individuals representing them, exert in establishing policies and affecting the conduct of the National Association of Amateur Athletes of America and the Amateur Athletic Union?

Review of Literature

Betts, in his work on America's Sporting Heritage, lists the formal organization of American Sport as having taken place in the years between

1865 and 1890.[1] The latter third of the Nineteenth Century did indeed give birth to numerous sport governing bodies including the North American Gymnastic Union (1865), the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen (1872), the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of Amateur Athletes of America (1875), the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (1888).

There have been two excellent dissertations dealing with the history of the AAU, one was done by Robert Korsgaard (A History of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States)[2] and the other by Arnold Flath (A History of Relations between the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States).[3] Both studies relied heavily on the Spirit of the Times for their information about AAU history. Many of the records, minutes and discussions of the NAAAA and AAU boards were printed in the Spirit of the Times making it one of the most valuable primary sources for the history of early sport governance. However, since James E. Sullivan and Wm. B. Curtis were two major administrators and defenders of A.A.U. policy and were also editors of that paper, one should exercise caution in using the Spirit of the Times.

The relationship between social class and sport governance has been a topic of some interest to researchers. In sport, as in other areas, the affluent seemingly have assumed much of the responsibility for

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[1] John R. Betts, America's Sporting Heritage: 1850-1950, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1974, pp. 109-111.

[2] Robert Korsgaard, "A History of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952).

[3] Arnold Flath, A History of Relations Between the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, 1905 1963, Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Co., 1964.

organization and governance. Warner, and his associates, produced a conceptual framework for understanding social class in America which includes five classes which characterize American Society: 1) the four hundred or elite, 2) the upper middle class, 3) the lower middle class, 4) the upper lower class, and 5) the lower lower class.[4] In general, the four hundred did not form athletic clubs. Packard in his book The Status Seekers lists the athletic clubs of Philadelphia and New York as being three or four levels below the clubs of the truly elite.[5] It was not unknown for members of the four hundred to join athletic clubs below their situation in life in order to lend status to lower level clubs and their members.[6] However, the role of the 400 in controlling amateur sport was negligible.

Recent studies by Willis and Wettan have found that sport clubs in New York City in the nineteenth century were stratified along religious, ethnic, occupational, political and social class lines.[7] These factors had a significant impact on athletic clubs and sport governing bodies. The wealthiest athletic clubs of New York were the New York, Manhattan, University, Staten Island, Berkeley, Knickerbocker and Crescent A.C. These clubs had the largest investments in land, buildings and facilities,

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[4]Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker and Kenneth Eells, Social Class in America (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1949), p. 70.

[5]Vance Packard, The Status Seekers (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), p. 180.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Joe Willis and Richard Wettan, "Social Stratification in New York City Athletic Clubs, 1865-1915." (Paper presented at North American Society for Sport History Convention, Boston, 1975).

and in addition, the entrance fees to join these clubs were very high.[8] An analysis of the occupations of the membership of these and other clubs showed that these clubs were of a higher socio-economic status than all the other athletic clubs of New York.[9] The leaders and members of the seven aforementioned clubs took an active interest in sport governance. It was the large clubs, whose members were professional men, bankers, publishers and successful business men, that played a leading role in first establishing and later modifying athletic governing structures.

Metcalfe in his study of the effect of social class on Canadian sporting life has found, similarly, that the more affluent Canadian business men and professionals were the most active in Canadian sport governance.[10]

The Evolution of Amateur Sport Governing Structures

In the early 1870's before any national amateur athletic body was formed the New York Athletic Club began to institute rules and regulations by which competition for their club would be governed. The games of the New York A.C. and other athletic clubs were closed to those who did not meet the individual clubs' definition of a gentleman and an amateur.[11]

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[8]A Club Men of New York (New York, The Republic Press, 1898).

[B]Knickerbocker Athletic Club, Club Book, (1899), p. 48.

[C]Berkeley Athletic Club (New York, Berkeley A.C., 1888), p. 19.

[D]Crescent Athletic Club, Club Book, (1891), p. 20.

[9]Albert J. Reiss, Occupations and Social Status (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc.), pp. 54-57.

[10]Alan Metcalfe, "Organized Sport and Social Stratification in Montreal, Canada, 1840-1901." (Paper presented at North American Society for Sport History Convention, Boston, 1975.)

[11]Spirit of the Times, September 14, 1872, p. 66.

In 1876 the New York A.C. began holding "national championship" meets on their home grounds. Despite the fact that the athletes who competed rarely came from farther away than Boston or Washington the meets were still called national championships. After conducting the championship games for three years the New York A.C., feeling that the administrative burdens were too great, called for a meeting of athletic clubs to form an association which would assume the burdens of the national championship games.[12] The original call for membership went out only to those clubs owning or leasing running paths or enclosed grounds. This rule, although it was soon abandoned, limited membership in the newly formed National Association of Amateur Athletes of America. To qualify for membership in the new association a club was required to hold one annual meeting per year of at least five events and open to all amateurs.[13]

With numerous clubs across the country and probably dozens in the New York area alone the NAAAA at the height of its influence maintained a membership of only fourteen clubs. Of the clubs which were members at least two-thirds were from the New York City metropolitan area. In 1887, near the end of the NAAAA's power, it had only 4-6 members. Yet, throughout its ten year history, the NAAAA maintained that it was the national governing body for amateur sport. Of the fourteen clubs that formed the NAAAA in 1879 only five were still members in 1885; the American A.C., the Manhattan A.C., the New York A.C., the Olympic A.C., and the Staten Island A.C.[14] Due to the small size of the membership, the NAAAA was never as

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[12] Frederick W. Janssen, History of American Amateur Athletics, (New York: Charles R. Bourne, 1885), p. 5.

[13] Ibid., p. 7.

[14] Ibid., pp. 11 and 17.

capable of controlling professionalism and gambling as its members had hoped. It was never in reality a national organization.[15]

The demise of the NAAAA was not totally due to its ineffectiveness. There was a tremendous sense of rivalry between the Manhattan A.C. and the New York A.C. for they were social, financial and athletic rivals.[16] Most of the smaller clubs aligned themselves with either the New York A.C. or the Manhattan A.C. if there was a dispute over athletic policies. When the New York A.C. withdrew from the NAAAA with a group of its followers to later form the Amateur Athletic Union, the NAAAA was virtually finished, although it did linger on for two more years. While the dispute festered some large organizations like the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America (ICAAAA), the Young Men's Christian Association and the Berkeley A.C. waited on the sidelines so as not to offend either the Manhattan or New York club.[17]

The power and influence of the New York A.C. in the early governance of amateur sport was unparalleled. Not only did the New York A.C. initiate the call which culminated in the first viable organization of athletic clubs, its lack of support of an earlier attempt to organize athletic clubs under the banner of the American Association of Amateur Athletics undoubtedly contributed to the ineffectiveness and quick dissolution of this association.[18] The New York A.C.'s power and influence was also

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[15]Amateur Athletic Union, Constitution, By Laws, General and Athletic Rules of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, (New York: A.G. Spalding and Bros., 1890), p. viii.

[16]New York Times, March 23, 1891, p. 5.

[17]Ibid., February 22, 1889, p. 8.

[18]New York Sportsman, February 2, 1878.

evidenced in the debilitating effect that its withdrawal from the NAAAA had upon that organization. Further, the New York A.C. played the dominant role in the founding of the Amateur Athletic Union in 1888 and in the success of the AAU in supplanting the NAAAA as the most influential association of athletic clubs.

The New York A.C. continued its dominant role in the AAU from its founding in 1887 until the adoption of the Mills Plan in 1891. The Mills Plan, developed by A.G. Mills of the New York A.C., was a scheme which allowed geographic representation to the national body as opposed to the former arrangement whereby individual clubs sent representatives to the annual meetings. Under the Mills Plan individual clubs sent delegates to their district association which then elected representatives to the national body. Each district had an equal number of representatives on the AAU Board of Governors. With this restructuring, the AAU for the first time became a truly national organization.[19] In addition to the division of the country into districts, the Mills Plan had provisions for alliances with other groups such as the League of American Wheelmen and the YMCA.

Until the adoption of this change the AAU was dominated by the large clubs, particularly from New York and the East. To illustrate this, of the seventy-three members belonging to the AAU in 1890, the year prior to the adoption of the Mills Plan, forty-three were from the New York Metropolitan Area and seventeen from other cities in the East.[20]

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[19] Spirit of the Times, August 16, 1890. Also Frederick William Janssen, "Athletic Clubs in the United States," found in Select Organizations in the United States (New York: The Knickerbocker Publishing Company, 1896), pp. 224-225. (Janssen was a member of Board of Governers of both NAAA and AAU.)

[20] AAU, Constitution, By Laws, General and Athletic Rules of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, 1890, pp. III and IV.

After several years under the new structure other parts of the country showed development but still lagged significantly. The AAU membership in 1907 showed a total of 234 clubs of which 113 clubs were members of the Metropolitan Association.[21] With the tremendous growth of the AAU after 1891, the impact of a single club upon the policies of the organization, even one as large and powerful as the New York A.C., was decidedly reduced. Using tactics which had previously been successful, the New York A.C. attempted to withdraw from the AAU several times in the 1890's and 1900's but these attempts to undermine the organization were ineffectual.[22] The cause for the New York A.C.'s pique with the AAU in these instances was typically rulings against the eligibility of its athletes.

Although no club could approach the early power and influence of the New York A.C., the Manhattan Athletic Club was a worthy rival for several years. Since these two clubs vied for the distinction of being the leading athletic club in the country, it would have been inevitable for them to clash in matters of athletic governance. When the New York A.C. withdrew from the NAAAA in 1887 the Manhattan A.C. was left with undisputed control. However, the Manhattan A.C. was unsuccessful in maintaining the NAAAA as a viable organization after the defection of the New York A.C. and was unable to counter the influence of the rapidly developing AAU. The NAAAA and AAU finally merged in 1890.

The New York A.C. was not the only big club to become dissatisfied

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[21] AAU, Minutes, 1907, p. 13.

[22] New York Times, November 18, 1895, p. 3 and July 20, 1897, p. 5 and January 6, 1915, p. 14.

with existing governing bodies and attempt change. The Staten Island Club in 1892 tried to form a new athletic association called the United States League of Athletic Clubs. The reasons for the revolt by the Staten Island A.C. were given in the New York Times. Many athletic clubs had begun to give boxing exhibitions which were not considered dignified by some of the elite clubs. It was also stated that:

> In New York and Brooklyn there are a number of so called athletic clubs which are only athletic bodies in name, being semi-political and semi-social, composed of a very considerable element of society. It is with the object of getting away from the control of those bodies of semi-professional 'sluggers' that the league is to be formed, and by this means to have one body of athletic club members representative from organizations which have a reputable standing in the community.[23]

This organization failed to develop, again due to lack of support by the New York A.C., the Manhattan A.C. and other key athletic clubs. Individual uprisings by the Crescent Athletic Club of Brooklyn, by the League of American Wheelmen, and the Y.M.C.A. were also failures. Fortunately for the AAU these seccessions by individual clubs and groups occurred periodically over a 20 year span rather than simultaneously. The periodic revolts by the big clubs after 1891 failed to seriously weaken the AAU because it had in reality became a national body by this time.

After the institution of the Mills Plan a few large clubs could no longer be assured of control of the AAU. The larger clubs allowed the majority of smaller, less affluent clubs to gain a voice in the governance of the AAU because it was not possible to control the practices of these clubs without giving them representation in the AAU. During the 1890's

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[23] Ibid., January 28, 1892, p. 2.

and 1900's however they became dissatisfied with the role smaller clubs were playing in the AAU. Under the Mills Plan some of the larger clubs had hoped to dominate the local associations and have their representatives sent to the AAU board. The smaller clubs however flocked to the local association meetings and the plans of the larger clubs were not totally successful. In 1891 in a surprise move the Manhattan A.C. supported the smaller clubs in the Metropolitan Association, because of the role that the New York A.C. played in wrecking the NAAAA.[24] During the decade of the 1890's there was much grumbling in the local associations as the larger clubs continued to lose power and influence. In 1892 the board of managers of the Central Association petitioned to have the AAU go back to its original form of government.[25] In May of 1893 the following statement appeared in Sprit of the Times:

> The Athletic Association has thirty-six clubs and its Board of Managers consists of twelve members, so that twenty-four of the thirty-six clubs cannot have a member on the Board. Naturally the larger, richer, more influential and more respectable clubs should furnish these twelve members. Yet we find that the Euclid A.C. and Dorian A.C., which have no athletes, no property and no athletic standing, and which are in every way the most insignificant of all the thirty-six clubs, are allowing representation on the Board...[26]

As stated previously, the attempts to undermine the AAU by the New York A.C., the Staten Island A.C. and others failed to reestablish the dominance they were seeking. However, this was not the end of the influence of the large affluent athletic clubs.

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[24] New York Times, January 24, 1891 p. 5.

[25] Ibid., February 5, 1892, p. 3.

[26] Spirit of the Times, May 13, 1893, p. 691.

The Men Who Served

After the institution of the Mills Plan the "big club" influence waned somewhat but it continued to be proportionately greater than the more numerous and less affluent clubs. Although the larger athletic clubs no longer dictated AAU policy, they still held a strong voice within the governing body. This influence was exerted by getting a disproportionate number of club members elected to the Board of Governors. Illustrative of this, the New York A.C. during the period studied (1870-1915) had a member on the board of governors every year but two. In addition the New York A.C. had two members on the board from 1903 to 1909 when A.G. Mills was appointed as delegate-at-large to the board. Moreover, members of the New York A.C. served as president of the national body six times, vice-president twice, treasurer four times and secretary three times.[27] The Manhattan Athletic Club which became the New Manhattan A.C., then the Knickerbocker A.C. and finally merged with the Pastime Club was also well represented on the board of governors. The Manhattan A.C. and its successors had a member on the board in twenty-seven out of the thirty-seven years studied. For eleven years the club was represented by two men when C.C. Hughes was made a delegate-at-large between 1899 and 1909. Members of the Manhattan A.C. were president seven years and secretary-treasurer twelve years.[28] The Staten Island A.C. before it pulled out of the AAU in 1892 was represented ten out of thirteen years.[29] It should be noted that from

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[27] Several sources were used for this reference. Janssen, op. cit., pp. 5-17; Korsgaard, op. cit., Appendix D, and Official A.A.U. Minutes for years 1903, 1905, 1907-1909, 1912.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

1903-1909 the Knickerbocker A.C. and the New York A.C. had four men on the board of governors out of a total of approximately sixty, when there were at least two hundred and fifty other clubs in the AAU at that time.[30] The contributions of four of the largest and most influential clubs to positions as officers in the AAU are presented in Table 1.

Membership on the Board of Governors carried with it a great deal of power. Only board members comprised certain committees such as the finance, schedule and rules. Other, less important, committees were chaired by a board member who then selected two others, usually non-members of the Board of Governors.[31] From the data available it was not possible to tabulate committee work done by members of the AAU from the large New York Athletic Clubs. However, even with limited data it was clear that the representatives of the big clubs were very active on the registration, legislation and championship committees, often chairing and placing several people on these important committees.[32]

One probable reason for the disproportionate influence by the large clubs of New York after 1890 was historical precedent. As seen above, clubs such as the New York A.C. and Manhattan A.C. had dominated the amateur athletic governing bodies from their inception in 1879. Individuals representing these clubs had the advantage of longevity and experience and were often called upon to provide leadership. Many of these men were highly successful businessmen and professionals with outstanding

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[30] Amateur Athletic Union, Official Handbook of the Amateur Athletic Union (New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1903-1909).

[31] Spirit of the Times, May 16, 1891, p. 750.

[32] Official A.A.U. Minutes, 1890, 1903, 1905, 1907-1909, 1912.

TABLE 1

Representatives of Large New York Clubs on Amateur Athletic Governing Boards

	NAAAA									AAU																													
	1879	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15
NYAC	S		P	P	P	X	T	VP	VP	AAU S	S		B	B	T	T	T	P	B	X	B	P	P	B	B	B	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB	B	B	B	B	B	B
MAC*	P		H	H	X	X	X	X	X	P	NAAA P		NAAA P		B	X	X	X	X	X	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	?	?	?	?	?
SIAC	B		VP	VP	VP	VP	X	T	T	X	B		B		B	X	X	X		D																			
PAC	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	VP	VP	S		S		S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	X

*In 1894 Manhattan Club became the New Manhattan Club. In 1896 the New Manhattan folded and the Knickerbocker AC took over its facilities and insignia.

NYAC = New York Athletic Club
MAC = Manhattan Athletic Club
SIAC = Staten Island Athletic Club
PAC = Pastime Athletic Club
B = Board Member
X = No Board Representative
S = Secretary
T = Treasurer
VP = Vice President
P = President
H = Handicapper
? = Data Not Available
D = Organization Ceased to Exist

leadership and organizational skills. It would take a separate paper to properly analyze the role of each man from the many clubs who played an influential part in the early history of amateur sport governance. There were many men with high qualifications and dedication who contributed to the success of the AAU. Table 2 is offered as an indication of the contributions of a small group of men from the large well-established athletic clubs.

Illustrative of the influence which certain individuals had on the policies and general direction of the AAU, the following examples are cited. William B. Curtis, one of the original founders of the New York A.C. who was often referred to as "Father Bill," was one of the early proponents of a strict interpretation of the amateur concept. Curtis was adament in his belief that the true amateur athlete competed for the love of the game and not for monetary reward. Curtis was in favor of limited value of athletic prizes and the paying of only the actual expense of athletes. Curtis' influence on amateur sport would probably have been considerable based solely upon his many years of service to the AAU as an officer and board member, however, when coupled with his position as Editor of Spirit of the Times for many years his influence was undoubtedly magnified. Curtis' editorial comments and feature articles about sport, and specifically amateurism, were widely read.[33]

James E. Sullivan, a contemporary of Curtis, adopted a similar stance with regard to amateurism and fought staunchly to defend the purist interpretation after Curtis' death.

Even though they were unable to control entirely the excessive

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[33] William B. Curtis, "These, Our Amateurs," Spirit of the Times, January-February, 1895.

TABLE 2

Longevity of Key A.A.U. Figures

Men	Membership in Clubs	Offices Held	Committees	Occupation
William B. Curtis	New York A.C. Founder	AAU Offices Secretary-1888 Treasurer-1891-1893 President-1894-1895 Board of Governors- 9 years Met.Ath.Association Delegate-5 years	Finance	Managing Editor for Spirit of the Times
C.C. Hughes	Manhattan A.C. New Manhattan A.C. Knickerbocker A.C. 32rd Degree Mason Knights Templar Brooklyn Yacht Club South London Harriers Tamany Society Chicago A.A. Irish A.A. N.Y. Press, Etc.	President of Various Athletic Clubs President National Cross Country Ass. Delegate-at-Large to AAU Bd. of Governers 1896-1909 13 years	Delegate at Large AAU	Railroad Official Senior Partner Hughes & Langley Realtors Publisher N.Y. Realty Journal
A.G. Mills	New York A.C. Union League National Arts Adirondack League Etc.	AAU Bd. of Governers 1889-1890, 1903-1909 - 9 years	Baseball Commissioner (Instituted Reserve Clause) Reorganized AAU Mills Plan 1890 Legislative Comm. of AAU 1903-1909	Lawyer-George Washington U. Vice-President Otis Elevator President National League
James E. Sullivan	Pastime A.C. Knickerbocker A.C. New Jersey A.C. Etc.	President Met.Athletic Assoc. AAU 1894-1914 President AAU 1906-1908 Secretary-Treasurer AAU 1888-1905, 1909-1914 Vice-President of NAAAA 1886-1887	Amer. Representative at Olympics 1900-1904, 1906, 1908 Helped Organize PSAL Served on AAU Championship and Registration Committee	Journalist, Editor Publisher Frank Leslie's Spirit of the Times Spalding's Ath. Library
Justice B.S. Weeks	New York A.C. Democratic Club of NY Atlantic Yacht Club Sons of the Revolution Manhattan Club, Etc.	Pres.of AAU 1898-1889 Bd.of Governers of AAU 1894-1915 21 years Delegate Metro. AA 1891-1915 Many offices in Metro. A.A.	New York A.C. President AAU Championship and Legislation Committees. Numerous Local and National Committees	Lawyer-Judge Columbia Law 1883 Son of Henry Astor Weeks

payment of expense money to athletes, William B. Curtis and James E. Sullivan were two of the strongest opponents of outright professional athletics. Sullivan, until he died, fought vigorously to prevent professionals and amateurs from having any contact with each other.[34] A proposal in 1913 offered by AAU President Gustavus T. Kirby which would have permitted joint competition between amateurs and professionals was effectively negated by Sullivan.[35] The power of Sullivan to influence athletic policies was even more in evidence in an incident which occurred in 1913. Commenting on the use of funds by Britain to train athletes for the 1916 Olympic games, Sullivan branded the scheme "flagrant professionalism" and stated that "America will not tolerate this kind of thing and you may take it from me that we will promptly withdraw from the games."[36] Curtis and Sullivan, who were considered the fathers of amateur athletics, were apparently able to instill this philosophy in their successors. Although their philosophy of amateurism may not be currently applicable, it is important not to overlook the fact that the actions and statements made by Curtis and Sullivan may have been both beneficial and necessary for the growth of amateur sport at the time.

Sullivan was also an outspoken opponent of competitive athletics for women. While favoring athletic competition and exercise for women within the walls of their own schools or in their own neighborhoods, he was rigorously opposed to public competition for women.[37] There was increasing

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[34] New York Times, October 25, 1913, p. 10.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., September 1, 1913, p. 3.

[37] Ibid., April 9, 1911, IV, p. 9.

pressure in 1913 and 1914 to permit the registration of women in the AAU and for the sanctioning of athletic events involving women, a measure which Sullivan countered. It is probably no coincidence that less than two months after Sullivan's death an amendment to the AAU constitution was passed which permitted women to register.[38]

A.G. Mills, Commissioner of Baseball and President of the New York A.C., was also influential in the AAU. It was his plan, of which he was the sole author, which reorganized the AAU in 1891. For a number of years when Mills was not elected to the Board of Governors he was appointed to the Board by James Sullivan and made special consultant to the legislative committee.[39] It was through the work of this influential committee that many constitutional and by-law amendments were conceived. Mills' work on the constitutional and legislative aspects of AAU work earned him a comparison with Jefferson and Washington and the title "Founder of the Athletic Republic."[40]

Why, the question might be asked, did the small clubs with a majority of votes allow these men such longevity in power. Their dedication and efficiency is one obvious explanation.[41] By the mid 1890's the AAU was running smoothly. Gambling and professionalism had largely been eliminated from amateur athletics. One other point of view which must be considered is that the poorer clubs were in and out of existence in a short period of time and their representatives could not develop any

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[38] New York Times, November 22, 1914, V, p. 4.

[39] Amateur Athletic Union, Official Handbook of the Amateur Athletic Union (New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1909), p. 50.

[40] Spirit of the Times, March 7, 1891.

[41] Ibid., January 6, 1894, p. 838.

seniority or influence. In addition, after their initial revolt in 1890, the smaller clubs did not organize themselves in their own best interests.

Decisions, Directions and the Uses of Athletic Power

Too much credit can not be given the early leaders of amateur athletics for their service to American sport. By separating the amateurs from the professionals and by rooting out gambling, sport was made more respectable so that it could take its proper place in schools, colleges and society in general. The image of amateur sport as a useless frivolity was shattered when upper middle class professionals, businessmen and educators dedicated their lives to competing as well as to promoting athletics. While attempting their arduous task of organizing amateur athletics, the early leaders were under constant attack from various forces in the athletic world.[42] Some additional accomplishments of this small group of dedicated men were the registration of all amateurs, the organization of national championship meetings in several sports and the regularization of athletic rules. In addition, the AAU which was financially shaky in the early 1890's was placed on solid ground by 1900.[43] In general the athletic clubs and the men who represented them did a great deal to popularize and promote amateur sport.[44]

Despite the good work done by the early leaders of the AAU they came under frequent criticism because the structure of governance which was created favored the large affluent clubs. A disproportionate number of representatives on the board came from the larger clubs with the greatest

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[42] Spirit of the Times, January 6, 1894, p. 838.

[43] Korsgaard, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

[44] John Krout, Annals of American Sport, (Vol. XV of the Peageant of America Series, ed. Ralph Gabriel. 15 Vols., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 185.

longevity. These representatives, joined by other upper middle class representatives on the board, made many crucial decisions through their action and non-action. The AAU did little to control the lavish "expense monies and benefits" paid to athletes by the big clubs. Nor did the AAU do anything to stop the rampant stealing of athletes by the big clubs from the small clubs. During the period studied, the AAU discussed the problem several times and lamented the death of many small clubs but never took firm action to solve the problem.[45] Under the title "Lost, Strayed and Stolen Athletes," James E. Sullivan comprehensively documented the fact that over fifty athletes who had formerly competed for other clubs had subsequently joined either the New York A.C. or the Manhattan A.C. Of the 34 athletes who competed for the Manhattan A.C. at the championships in 1890, 33 had previously competed for other clubs. Of the 78 points scored by the Manhattan A.C., 77 were won by athletes who had previously competed for other clubs. Similarly, the New York A.C. could claim only seven of its 29 athletes with no prior club membership. These seven managed only one and three-quarter points out of a total of 36 points in the championships. Sullivan, lamenting this state of affairs, stated: "The moral of this story is hidden under the Bailey, Banks, and Biddle plaque."[46] This award was given to the amateur club champion of the United States.

Club recruiters went so far as to import athletes from Europe and from other cities in this country to further their championship hopes.[47] Despite much criticism of this practice, little was ever done about this

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[45] Spirit of the Times, March 21, 1891, p. 397.

[46] Ibid., November 14, 1890, p. 661.

[47] New York Times, December 19, 1891, p. 3.

problem. It should be noted that A.G. Mills of the New York A.C., the father of baseball's reserve clause and noted expert on preventing athletes from jumping clubs, was unable to devise a solution to this problem during the years he served as chairman of the legislative committee of the AAU.

One action the AAU failed to take was the promotion of women's athletics. The AAU even barred women from registering as amateur athletes for many years.[48] It wasn't until late in 1914 after the death of James E. Sullivan, a staunch opponent of women's athletics, that women were admitted to the AAU.[49] Before 1914 women were already competing in five Olympic sports; golf in 1900, archery 1904, figure skating 1908, swimming and diving 1912 and tennis 1900. In fact, pressure for Olympic competition along with Sullivan's death may have opened the door to registration of women athletes by the AAU.[50]

A contradictory aspect of AAU policy was the manner in which the amateur code was administered. The AAU forbade valuable prizes and gambling at athletic meets, but did little to stop large clubs from subsidizing athletes through the payment of training and travel expenses.[51] In other words professional athletes could not earn a living directly from competition, but it was all right to be an underpaid athletic representative of a large athletic club. In the Spirit of the Times in 1891 Wm. B. Curtis spoke out against

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[48] New York Times, January 18, 1914, IV, p. 1.

[49] Ellen Gerber, et al., The American Women in Sport (Reading, Mass.: The Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1974), p. 37.

[50] Ibid., p. 145.

[51] Spirit of the Times, February 7, 1891, p. 112 and Amateur Athletic Union, Official Handbook of the Amateur Athletic Union, (New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1896), pp. 34-35.

a proposed rule which would have limited expenses paid to athletes. The AAU at a subsequent meeting tabled the motion dealing with athletic expenses, and the ultimate result of this policy which favored the wealthier clubs was the death of many small and medium sized clubs.[52]

During the period studied the policies of the AAU and NAAAA seemed to favor clubs from the New York metropolitan area. In the years between 1879 and 1915 every annual meeting except one was held in New York City.[53] The annual championships also were usually held in New York which saved athletes from the metropolitan area the expense and effort of traveling to meetings. Annual meetings and championships were probably held in New York because of the generosity of the New York A.C., which allowed the national organization to use its magnificient facilities. The Metropolitan Athletic Association of the AAU always had many more members than other regional associations. In 1892 a special amendment was passed to allow clubs within the Metropolitan Association to form smaller geographic associations.[54] The purpose of this amendment was to give more men from the metropolitan association a chance to serve on the AAU board of governors.[54] This naturally increased the power of clubs from the metropolitan area. In addition to the over-representation of the Metropolitan Association in the AAU, other forms of representational bias seemed to be present in sport governing structures. As stated earlier there was no direct election of officials of the AAU. The officers of the AAU were elected by the AAU board. The AAU board was elected by regional

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[52] Spirit of the Times, March 14, 1891, p. 357.

[53] Korsgaard, p. 388.

[54] Spirit of the Times, May 21, 1892, p. 736.

and affiliated associations. The regional and affiliated associations were elected by the representatives of local clubs. Only on the lowest level, the election of club representatives to the regional boards, did the athletes receive any representation. Even on this level their representation was questionable since athletes did not have the right to vote in many club elections.[55] This is in contrast to the period of the rise of athletic clubs, 1868-1880, when athletes had better representation in their own clubs as well as in the NAAAA.[56] The AAU was the target of a great deal of criticism during the period studied by those who felt they were disenfranchised, and much the same criticism has continued to the present time.

Conclusions

During the early history of amateur athletic governance a few large sporting clubs from New York apparently had the power to make, break, reorganize, and give direction to the national governing bodies. During the period from 1870-1890, amateur sport was not ruled by a truly national body. In the next twenty-five years the power of the New York clubs declined. However, they still maintained their influence on the AAU governing board through the hard work of several of their representatives. In this fashion a few large New York clubs held positions of power disproportionate to their numbers. The decisions and policies

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[55]A New York Athletic Club, Constitution and By Laws (New York: New York Athletic Club, 1890), p. 7.

[B] City Athletic Club, Constitution, By Laws and House Rules (New York: City Athletic Club, 1913), pp. 15-16.

[C] Knickerbocker Athletic Club, Club Book (1899), p. 44.

[56] Richard Wettan and Joe Willis, "Sport and Social Stratification in the United States, 1865-1900." (Paper presented at the North American Society for Sport History Convention, London, Ontario, 1974), p. 13.

that were made may have favored these larger upper middle class male clubs.

It would be unfair to end this paper without once again giving credit to the large and powerful clubs and their representatives for creating an atmosphere under which athletics could thrive. The affluent athletic clubs gained respectability for sport which it otherwise may never have acquired. Without the organizational and promotional genius of the early leaders, amateur sport may not have reached the heights that were achieved during this era.

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